Omelia Hall

The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

UNIVERSALIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.

VOL. XXIV. MAY 16, 1874. NO. 3.

For the Myrtle.

Selling Curls.

"I HAVE been down to Mrs Scranton's this afternoon," said Jenny Look to her friend, Susan Grey, as she met her one afternoon in Spring.

"Have you been down there? I have thought of going, but have not got started yet."

"I wish you would go. They need friends now, if ever."

"How did you find them?"

"Oh, very poor indeed. At least I should think they are, if looks are any indication. Two of the children are very sick, and Mrs. Scranton herself is down now."

"Well, what will they do?"

"They must have some one to go and take care of them."

"Who will go? There is nothing for a nurse to eat, and no place for her to sleep, and no food or medicine to give to the sick ones. What could a nurse do? It seems to me it would be of very little use for any one to go there."

"But we can't let a whole family die without care in a Christian land."

"I know it; and yet I don't see how you can do much in this case. Ned Scranton will spend everything for liquor that is put into that house. They say he has sold all the furniture, and even the children's shoes to get his drink."

"I know that he has."

"Well, how can you pity a family when their money goes in that way?"

"Mrs. Scranton and the children are not to be blamed for his wrong doing. If he sells the food out of their mouths, they are the more to be pitied."

"I think she might do better than she does."

"How?"

"I'd cure him of drinking if he was my husband."

"That is a very easy thing to say. But I guess a good many women who are living with drunken husbands would be glad to cure them if it was an easy thing to do."

"Well, easy or hard, it ought to be done."

"Just now we can't afford to wait for the experiment to be tried. Here is a family dying for

want of food and care, and they must have it."

"How are you going to get the money to give it to them?"

"I shall give a little myself, and ask others to give."

"I tell you everybody is tired of giving in that direction. You have just moved here, and of course can't know about this case as I do. That family has been kept alive by charity until every body is tired of giving."

"But the woman has tried to work, hasn't she?"

"Yes. In her way I suppose she has tried, but the poor drunken husband has undone more than the wife could do. I have given and given for that purpose, and the last time I gave I said it should be the last time, and I am resolved to keep my word."

Susan walked on rapidly, and Jennie was left alone thinking what she had better do next.

"I'll go and ask Mr. Purse, the merchant," she said to herself. "I have heard that he is very close in money matters, but perhaps in a case of necessity like this he will open his hand and heart."

Jennie was soon at the store, and she had the good fortune to find the merchant alone.

"Good afternoon," Mr. Purse. "I am glad to find you," said she.

"Thank you," said Mr. Purse. "That is quite a compliment from a young lady."

Jennie was a little embarrassed by this, for Mr. Purse was a bachelor, and very fond of the ladies, and she did not like his taking the remark she had made as a personal compliment, so she made haste to say:

"I called to see if you would give something toward the support of a poor family who are in great distress."

This remark changed the tone of Mr. Purse's temper, for he disliked above all things to be asked to give.

"Who do you want charity for?" he asked, in a manner so cold, that Jennie felt almost sure that her mission to him would be a failure.

"I am asking for Mrs. Scranton and her children, who are sick and really suffering for food and care."

"They deserve to suffer," Mr. Purse replied. "They have been helped again and again, and it's no use. Old Scranton drinks up everything that goes into that house."

"But do you think it right to punish the wife for the husband's wrong doing? She must not starve because he is a drunkard."

"She might leave him then. She might have plenty of help and pity if she would leave him to his wretchedness, and try to get work and support her children decently."

"Well, this is not a time, when they are all sick, to talk to her about work."

"No. But she has been talked to enough in times past. This is not the first time that they have been in a suffering condition. I resolved the last time I gave to her that it should be the last time."

"But, Mr. Purse, you surely will not refuse to give a little for the children, if you have hardened your heart toward the mother. They are not to blame for being the children of a drunkard, and are not old enough to make any decision about deserting a drunkard's home, and bettering their condition elsewhere."

"I don't know but I may be persuaded to do something for them on your account. A little, a very little something," he said slowly. Then he added, "Even that is much against my will. It would be right to let those parents see their children suffer. Perhaps that would teach them a lesson that might do them good."

Mr. Purse walked slowly toward the money drawer as he said this, so slowly that Jennie felt vexed by his unwillingness, and said:

"I don't care to take this gift as a personal favor. If you have nothing to give to Mrs. Scranton and her suffering children, I will not take your gift on any other condition. Good afternoon."

Jennie vanished from the door as these last words escaped her lips, leaving the amazed bachelor to his reflections.

"Rather touchy," said he to himself. "I guess you wont make much going on at that rate. But I've saved my money anyway. She may as well be mad as I poor. The money would have done nobody any good if it had been given. Old Ned Scranton would have been drunk once more this week, that's all that would have come of my giving."

With these thoughts Mr. Purse satisfied himself, while Jennie went her way, very vexed by the interview she had had with him.

"I will go and see Mrs. Brewer," said Jennie. "It is a long way to walk in this warm day, but I believe she will give me something, and it's worth trying for at any rate."

Jennie had fully a mile to walk, for Mrs. Brewer lived on a farm some distance from the village.

"There is Mrs. Brown, and Mrs. Smith, and Mrs Oldham, all living on this road before I reach Mrs. Brewer. I believe I will try them all. It can do no harm to give them the opportunity to help this poor family."

Jennie followed out her impulse and stopped at all of these houses, but the same denial met her at every one. They all told the same story; the Scrantons were not deserving of charity, and they had been helped until everybody was tired of helping them.

She turned away from all these doors sick at heart. Still she kept up her courage, thinking that Mrs. Brewer certainly would not fail her. When she arrived there, Mrs. Brewer was very glad to see her. She invited her in and gave her fruit, and tried to make her call pleasant, but when she told her errand, Mrs. Brewer said:

"I am afraid this is mistaken kindness on your part. That family is really so worthless; they make so poor use of everything that is given them, that it leaves us little courage or willingness to do more."

"Oh, I hope you will not refuse me, Mrs. Brewer," said Jennie, "I have had such poor luck, or, I should rather say, no luck at all, at all the other places."

"I am sorry for you, my dear. It is very kind of you to walk all this distance in the hot sun, to try and relieve the suffering of others. You will be rewarded for the effort, if nothing comes of it for the relief of the Scrantons."

"But I trust you will not send me away entirely empty-handed. Only think how many places I have been to, and as yet I have not received one penny. The family will die of want, unless some one opens their heart."

"I will give you a little something, Jennie, but it will be given to reward your effort, and not because I believe the family deserving."

Jennnie was touched by this statement. She had refused money from Mr. Purse when he put his giving on this ground. But now she was weary and worn with the heat; she was sick at heart and discouraged because of the many refusals she had met, and she felt willing to take aid on any ground, rather than go away empty-handed. So she replied,

"I will take anything you give, very thankfully."

Mrs. Brewer took out her purse and gave half a dollar. Oh, how small it looked to Jennie when she thought of the wants of the sick family. It would scarcely furnish them food for a single meal, and Mrs. Brewer had been her last hope.

She walked slowly at first, after leaving Mrs. Brewer's door. Her heart was heavy, and it made her feet heavy. But suddenly she gets a new thought. She has to pass a barber's shop on her way into town. As she approaches it, the thought comes to her that she might raise money by selling her hair. It is long and beautiful, and hangs in curls about her neck. She has always been told that her hair is her chief beauty, and has prized it as every girl prizes what adds to her attractions. But now she is resolved to part with it. Walking into the shop with a firm step she said to the barber:

"I wish you to cut my hair."

"Cut your hair?" said he, with a look of surprise on his face. "Surely you are not in earnest, Miss Jennie?"

"Yes, I am thoroughly in earnest. I want my hair cut."

"Have you been thinking of it long?"

"No. I have but just made up my mind to it this afternoon."

"Then I would advise you not to have it cut to-day. You may be sorry for it after it is done."

"But I am resolved to have it done now, and I want you to go about it at once."

The barber still hesitated. Jennie looked at him firmly, and with a commanding air she said,

"I will have you do as I tell you, at once."

Seeing that she was decided, the barber took his shears and approached the chair where she had seated herself. Taking up the beautiful long curls in his hand, he said,

"Miss Jennie, if you were my sister I would not have this done for five hundred dollars."

"Well, I am not your sister, and I do not expect to get more than a tenth of five hundred dollars for my curls, and yet I will have them cut."

"I will give you fifty dollars for them if you persist in having them off. But again I advise you not to part with them."

"My mind is made up, and I do not want any more words about it."

Seeing how decided she was, the barber went very reluctantly to his work. He worked slowly, for it seemed that every curl he cut was done against his will. And yet the work was at last accomplished.

When Jennie rose from the chair she avoided looking at the mirror that hung opposite; she also avoided looking at the curls, but said hastily,

"If it is convenient I would like the money for my curls now."

"Fortunately I have the money by me." said the barber, and going to his desk he counted out the fifty dollars and came back and laid it in her hands.

Very glad was he to make this bargain, for he felt very sure of getting much more for the hair when it changed hands again. Jennie had no thought, save of delight to have the money in her hands. She would not allow any selfish feeling at the loss of her hair, to interfere with her delight at getting the money for the relief of the sufferers. She stopped at the baker's and bought bread and crackers; at the butcher's and ordered beef; at a furniture store and ordered a mattress, and at Dorothy Wiggin's and engaged her to go and nurse Mrs. Scranton and the children until they were well again. Then she went down to see what she could do for them before Mrs. Wiggin came. Just as she arrived at the cottage, Mr. Scranton was coming home, and she met him at the door. He had been drinking, but not enough to entirely becloud his faculties, and as soon as he saw Jennie he noticed the lost curls.

"Good evening, Miss Jennie," said he. "You are so changed that I scarcely knew you."

"Am I?" said Jenny, pleasantly. "It is to keep your poor wife and children from starving, that I am changed, for I have just sold my hair to get money to buy food for them."

Ned Scranton looked at her in amazement.

"Is this true, Miss Jennie?" said he.

"It is true, Mr. Scranton," said Jennie, earnestly, "and I would do it all ungrudgingly if I was cure that it would do them any permanent good."

Mr. Scranton burst into tears and said, "You shall see how much good it will do. I will never take another glass of liquor so long as I live. If a beautiful young girl can lose her loveliness for the sake of my wife and children, I can surely give up my wickedness for them."

Jennie's heart leaped for joy when she heard these words.

"Will you keep this promise?" she said,

"Yes, God helping me, I will."

Time has proved the strength of Mr. Scranton's resolution.

Years have passed since the spring afternoon on which Jennie parted with her curls, but Ned Scranton has never broken his promise. He has been industrious and frugal from that time on, and no family in the town lives happier now than his.

I need hardly tell you that Jennie has been almost an idol with them since their time of prosperity began, and she has been often heard to say, that no act of her life ever brought more blessing to others, or more satisfaction to herself than the parting with her curls.

Mrs. E. M. Bruce.

Orphan Daisy.

"MAMMA, mamma! I do want my dear mamma!" sobbed little Daisy, her face all wet with tears, and her silky curls all tangled, as she lay upon her little bed.

"Mamma, mamma!" she cried; but no mother's tender hand pushed away the locks from the little hot forehead; no mother's soothing voice quieted her sobs; no mother's arms were folded around the weeping child. Poor Daisy! Her mother had never failed to come before when she had called, and she could not understand the sad change. Why could it be?

"In the next room, lying so quietly upon the bed, was a beautiful lady. She did not stir nor speak, nor even breathe. Those white hands had once caressed Daisy's soft cheek and golden hair; those eyes, now closed forever, had once looked with inexpressible love into Daisy's blue eyes; but there she lay, cold and motionless.

Yes, Daisy's "dear mamma" was dead; and she could never speak again to the little one whom she had loved so dearly. How sad! — only three years old, and no mother to shield her from sorrow and harm, and to love and comfort her!

Down stairs, Daisy's papa, pacing back and forth in the library, and trying to reconcile his own heart to God's will, heard the little voice calling, "Daisy wants mamma!" and his eyes filled with tears as he thought of the loss that could never be made good.

Aunt Clara came softly into the nursery. She had been very busy, and could not come before, or she would not have left her darling so long. Her loving heart was sorely grieved as she heard the little one's piteous cries. She took up the child and folded her in her arms, and laid the little head on her shoulder.

"Daisy must not cry so hard," she said soothingly. "Mamma *cannot* come to Daisy; but Auntie Clara is here, and loves her darling. Tell auntie what it is that grieves you so, dear heart." So, soothed and petted, the little one gradually ceased sobbing, and fell softly asleep.

Her auntie paced gently back and forth till she was sure she would not wake, and then laid her gently down. She was partly undressed already; and Aunt Clara took off her little garments, and made her all ready for the night. Then she stood a long time looking at her, with tears in her eyes.

"Poor little motherless one," she said to herself; "auntie must be very good te her pet."

She thought of her own mother, whom she had missed so sorely for many years, and pitied anew the little child who had been bereaved *so young*. Then there came into her mind the words, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take up"; and she lifted her heart in prayer to the good Heavenly Father, that he would keep his promise to this poor little one, and help her to fill, as far as possible, a mother's place. Then, with a soft kiss, she stole away.

Many times after this Daisy awoke, and cried for her mamma. It was sad indeed to hear her, but her auntie tried all she could to replace the lost one; and, after a time, Daisy seemed to be comforted. But the baby mind could not, for weeks and months, understand where her mother was, and why she did not come back. When told that Jesus was taking care of her, she would say:

"But where is mamma? Doesn't she want to see Daisy? Doesn't she cry for Daisy and papa?"

"No, darling; mamma will never cry any more. She is happy with God in heaven."

Daisy could not yet comprehend it, and she seemed to expect her to come back; and whenever she found a rose in the garden, she would pick it "for dear mamma," and put it in her room.

By-and-by Daisy knew that she could not have her mother back, and would say, "Daisy will be good, and go to mamma some day," and a pang would go through her father's heart at the words, and he would fold his darling closer to his breast for fear he should lose her too.

But God has work for Daisy to do in this world, and he has not taken her away. She is still living, but is trying every day to "be good, so she can go to mamma some day." — *Well-Spring.*

The Little Girl and the Robin.

LITTLE GIRL.

Robin, at my window sill
Tapping with your tiny bill,
Don't you find the weather chill?

ROBIN.

No, the sky is warm and blue,
And I've nothing else to do,
So I thought I'd sing to you.

LITTLE GIRL.

Tell me, Robin, where you go
When our fields are white with snow,
And the wintry tempests blow?

ROBIN.

I am safe in southern bowers,
Nestled 'mid the orange flowers, —
Storms are there but summer showers.

LITTLE GIRL.

You are welcome as the Spring,
Now some crumbs to you I'll bring,
You must eat before you sing.

ROBIN.

Thank you, maiden, but I'll wait,
If you please, and bring my mate:
She is swinging on the gate.

LITTLE GIRL.

Build your nest on yonder tree,
Every morning sing for me,
I shall so delighted be.

ROBIN.

If you will a promise make
That to hear our songs you'll wake,
We will build there for your sake.

The Bound Myrtle.

Thousands of its young readers have been carefully saving all the numbers of the MYRTLE with the purpose of having them bound into handsome books at the end of each year.

We now have the numbers for the year ending with April, 1874, bound in a handsome volume. The covers are of green cloth, bevelled boards, and the heading of the MYRTLE is printed in gold upon the side.

The MYRTLE will be bound for 75 cents a volume. To those who live at a distance, we will send the covers for 50 cents, postage prepaid.

Send orders to Universalist Publishing House, 37 Cornhill, Boston.

Sunday School News.

MASSACHUSETTS.

—The course of semi-monthly meetings at Wesleyan Hall, before the Union, was concluded on Monday evening, April 27th. The last two of the series were given by the Rev. A. J. Patterson, D.D., upon the evenings of April 13th and 27th, his subject being "The Journey from Egypt to Sinai." Dr. Patterson made his addresses, or rather familiar talks, very interesting to those present. And by the use of map and diagrams presented the subject in a very clear manner, drawing from the marked features of the wonderful journey lessons of faith and duty for to-day.

MAINE.

—The young ladies of the Paris Hill Sunday School have held two festivals, netting the amount of $135 within the last year, and have given the money to the society towards the repairing of the church. With such interest at work the society hopes soon to have a pastor. The Sunday School has been supporting itself alone, for some time.

NEW YORK.

— The young people of St. Lawrence University, at Canton, have the pleasant custom of a "tree holiday" which they celebrate the last Friday in April. Every student — who chooses, and most of them do — procures a tree and sets it out in the ample grounds of the University. In time we shall hear of "University Park," crowning that noble hill with its academic groves. Besides the tree-planting the day is given up to literary and musical exercises, with supper and reunion in the evening.

INDIANA.

— An officer of the Sunday School in Muncie, informs us that the Sunday School there is prospering apace under the lead of that live Sunday School man for pastor, Br. Guthrie. And this state of things is confirmed by the fact of a contemplated addition to the hundred copies of our paper that already go to the little ones there.

— The Lafayette *Courier* of March 23d, reports as follows: "The concert of the Universalist Sunday School last evening was, as usual with this school, a complete success in every particular; the exercises being very attractive and well rendered by the scholars. And as for singing, this school is almost perfect under the care and training of George Rogers, their superintendent, and well deserves the success that greets them on these very happy occasions.

COLORADO.

—At Colorado Springs, in this distant State, Rev. Mrs. Wilkes, now residing there, has organized a Universalist Society, and a Sunday School of forty-two members. She is one of those who find the Lord's vineyard wherever they go.

KANSAS.

—A very good Sunday School is maintained at the town of Seneca, on the St. Joseph and Denver City Railroad. The average attendance is ninety and the interest increasing. Rev. R. M. Bartlett preaches three Sundays of each month, the remaining time being given to missionary labor.

Acrostics of the Bible.

I.

In an excellent little paper published in Michigan, "The Youth's Instructor," we find an account of "Inspired Acrostics" which will be of great interest to all young students of the Bible. We have condensed it somewhat for the "instruction" of our own Sunday Sohool "youths" and here give the first part of the account.

"An acrostic is a poem in which the first, middle, or final letters of the lines form some particular word or sentence. The most common form is where the first letters of the lines, when read downward, form the word or sentence.

Young people generally are interested in acrostics. This is not strange. In the Middle Ages, not a few of the first poets indulged, to a great extent, in that style of writing. And from the earliest times down, acrostical writings have been quite common.

Even in the Bible, strange as it may seem, there are no less than twelve beautiful acrostics. These are not formed like those we usually see; for in Hebrew the poetry does not rhyme, but is more like our blank verse. These sacred acrostics are all formed of the Hebrew alphabet, which has twenty-two letters.

The most interesting of these Scripture acrostics is the 119th psalm. Open your Bibles to that psalm, and you will see that it has one hundred and seventy six verses, and is composed of twenty-two sections with just eight verses in each section, and that there is a strange word at the head of each division. These strange words are the names of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

This remarkable acrostic is formed thus: In the Hebrew Bible, which has the language in which David wrote, the first eight verses all begin with the letter *aleph*, which is our letter a. In the second division, each of the eight verses begins with *beth*, or b. The next eight verses each begins with *gimel*, the third letter, which answers to our g, and so on, through the twenty-two sections of the entire psalm.

Dr. Adam Clarke, the Methodist commentator, says that this psalm 'treats in general on the privileges and happiness of those who observe the law of the Lord.' This is quite evident. And it is a fact that the holy law of God seems to be referred to in almost every verse of this lengthy psalm. It is an extended eulogy on the ten commandments. This psalm is chanted every Sabbath afternoon by every Hebrew synagogue in the world. Nearly every Jew, young and old, has it by heart. The twelve words which are used to describe the law of God are, *Testimonies; Commandments; Precepts; Word; Law; Ways; Truth; Judgments; Righteousness; Statutes; Faithfulness;* and *Name.*

In the next number we will give the account of the other acrostics in the Bible.

The Worship of the Tabernacle.

When the tabernacle was built a new order of religious worship was given, to be regularly performed in this sacred place. It was not like our worship, addressed to the mind. For our worship is such as suits an intelligent people, who think and reason for themselves, and whose understanding must be convinced, by spoken and written thoughts. These Israelites were not *thinking* people. They had but just emerged from slavery and were rude and childish, and must see things with their eyes and handle them with their hands before they could believe in them: their *seuses* had to be addressed instead of their minds. And so the worship God ordained for them was a worship to be performed with the hands and seen by the eyes; a worship by symbols and offerings, by feasts and sacrifices.

The sacrifices to the Lord were to be offered on the great brazen altar in the court, in the sight of all the congregation of Israel. Like the tabernacle itself, these sacrifices were to be given of their *best:* the first fruits of their harvests and their flocks. The grains were waved above the altar; parts of the beasts were burned thereon: and all the parts not consumed in the sacrifices, as well as the grains, were used for the food of the priests. Perhaps the object of the burnt-offerings was to symbolize to them the unseen God whose presence hovered over them. As the offering in consuming became invisible to the eyes, its smoke and odors were wafted upward and diffused through space, calling their thoughts up to the great unseen Spirit that dwelt above and all around them.

In the first six chapters of Leviticus, which is the book containing the laws regarding worship, may be found the account of the five different offerings to be made by the people, and the way they shall be celebrated.

Besides this daily worship the Israelites were given three great yearly feasts to keep, as a part of their worship. The first was the feast of the Passover, by which they were to commemorate every year, their deliverance from their slavery in Egypt. Seven days the feast was to last, but the "great day of the feast" was that which gave it its name, — the anniversary of the time when the destroying angel "passed over" the houses of the Israelites and smote the first-born of the Egyptians.

The second feast was a feast of gratitude kept in the time of the wheat-harvest. It was for one day only, the fiftieth day after the Passover, and for this reason was afterwards called the day of Pentecost, which means the fiftieth day.

The third feast was in the month of October, after all the harvests, and lasted again seven days. It answered in signification to our Thanksgiving day, a kind of "harvest home." It was called the Feast of Tabernacles, because then the Israelites were to remember God's mercy to them while they dwelt in tents in their long journey from Egypt, when they were fed with the quails and manna, and in so many ways preserved from danger and death. Many generations afterwards when the Israelites had dwellings and cities of their own, they dwelt in tents or booths through all the time of this feast, that they might keep fresh in mind the hardships of this time, and God's great goodness and mercy. So it was always called "The Feast of Tabernacles." All these feasts, as well as the same daily worship in the Temple, we find still kept in the time of Christ, more than a thousand years afterwards.

Acrostic and Enigma.

B was Joseph's younger brother;
E wore the mantle of another;
A first wore the high priest's robe;
U the native land of Job;
T in the wilderness was built;
I's blood Abraham would have spilt;
F in prison left St. Paul;
U before the ark did fall;
L from sleep did Jesus call.

S a wise and powerful king;
P in prison, psalms did sing;
R the place where Paul was slain;
I the traitor's other name;
N the wickedest of tyrants;
G the greatest of the giants.

I of old, God's chosen nation;
S beheld the "Lord's Salvation."

H stands for the word "Hosanna";
E the city of Diana;
R once saved his brother's life;
E was Zachariah's wife.

Charade.

"And where are you going, old man?" I said,
"Where are you bound?" said I;
The old man wagged his weary head,
And made this funny reply:

"If you'll guess me a riddle, young man," said he,
"I'll answer you in a word.
For I am my *first* and *second*, you see,
And well advanced in my *third*."

"But why do you lean on your ashen staff,
And why do you walk so slow?"
The old man's smile broke into a laugh,
As he answered with chuckles low:

"A sickness, my *second*, got hold on me,
And a dreadful time I had;
Till a learned leech gave me my *first*,
My case was decidedly bad.

"And now I go on my *whole*, young man,
In my *third* I go on my *whole*;
I take my *first* for my body's weal,
And my *whole* for the good of my soul."

— *Young Folks.*

Answer.

MAY 9. THE MYRTLE.

THE MYRTLE
IS PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY BY THE
UNIVERSALIST PUBLISHING HOUSE
37 Cornhill, Boston.

CHARLES CAVERLY, Jr. Agent.

TERMS — PAYMENT TO BE MADE IN ADVANCE.
Single copy, or less than ten, 75 cents per year.
Ten or more copies sent in one package, *without names*, to one address, 50 cents each per year.